

ACADEMIA – INDUSTRY SEED FUND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR 2025/26FY

The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) in collaboration with the UJ Technology Transfer Office is pleased to announce the opening of the 2025/26 Academia–Industry Seed Fund Call and invites researchers to submit their applications. Below are the details of the calls (please also refer to Annexure A: Seed Fund investment framework).

Purpose of the Call

This initiative, part of the TIA Seed Fund Programme, seeks to advance South Africa’s National System of Innovation by fostering impactful partnerships between publicly funded research institutions and industry stakeholders. The main goal is to bridge the gap between early-stage research and market readiness by accelerating the commercialization of publicly funded research outputs. Through this, the programme aims to facilitate effective technology transfer and industry adoption, with a focus on projects that demonstrate strong commercialization potential and significant socio-economic benefits.

Who Should Apply

Joint applications are invited from the following:

- Researchers affiliated with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Science Councils (SCs)
- Industry partners, including Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), start-ups, State-Owned Entities (SOEs), and private companies.
- Priority will be placed on supporting SMMEs and start-ups that utilize publicly funded technologies and research output from universities and science councils to develop innovative products and services.

Focus Areas

While proposals in all TIA focus areas are welcome - including Health, Agri-biotech, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Industrial Biotech, Natural Resources, Energy, ICT, and Advanced Manufacturing - priority consideration will be given to projects aligned with the following decadal plan thematic priorities:

- Advanced Manufacturing and Industrial Modernization
- Agricultural Innovation and Food Security
- Digital Transformation and Inclusive Innovation
- Energy Sustainability and Environmental Innovation
- Health Innovation and Well-Being

Eligibility Criteria

To be considered, applications must involve collaborative technology development resulting in joint intellectual property (IP) and must be submitted jointly by:

- At least one academic partner
- At least one industry partner

Mandatory Requirements

Applications must include the following documentation; submissions lacking any of these will not be considered:

- A signed collaboration agreement, or evidence that such an agreement is being finalized (e.g., a draft agreement or a signed letter from both parties outlining the collaboration scope).
- Proof of co-funding for collaborations involving SOEs and/or private companies
- A closeout report for any previous TIA-funded projects (if applicable)
- A detailed project plan completed using the prescribed template
- A technical report describing the status and readiness of the innovation

Exclusions

The following types of applications will not be considered:

- Service-based projects that are primarily service-oriented rather than collaboration-focused
- Projects that have already received TIA Seed Fund or other public funding for the same activities
- Applications without clearly defined, innovation-driven outcomes with commercialization potential.

Call parameters

Item	Seed Fund
Typical Funding Instrument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditional grant- up 1.5X the initial capital invested and/or • SAFE and convertible notes • Discounting measures to apply for transformation Agenda and high socio-economic impact targets
Funding Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to R1,500,000 • Inclusive of 20% allocated towards enabling activities and management fees.
TRL/Stage of development	5-6
Funding period guideline	Maximum 12 - 24 months

Please refer to Annexure A: Seed Fund Investment Framework for additional information and requirements

This call is accompanied by the following documents that you must familiarize yourself with:

- Annexure A: Seed Fund Investment Frameworks
- Annexure B: Seed Fund Application Forms and project plan template to be completed by applicants.

The internal deadline for submissions is **28 November 2025**, by close of business. No late submissions will be considered. **ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE EMAILED TO charmainen@uj.ac.za.**